

splash!

quick facts on...

## Recreation Opportunities in Stormwater Treatment Areas

NOVEMBER 2006

**The South Florida Water Management District** is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

**Our Mission** is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

**R**esplendent in red and pink feathers, adult roseate spoonbills are easy visual targets for even novice bird watchers making their first foray into the constructed wetlands of a stormwater treatment area.

But more recreational experiences including walking, sightseeing, and hunting, are waiting for day trippers to several of these unique wetlands designed by the South Florida Water Management District to aid in Everglades restoration.

### How a Stormwater Treatment Area Works

The key purpose of stormwater treatment areas is to remove phosphorus from urban and agricultural runoff flowing into the Everglades. Too much of the nutrient phosphorus promotes an overgrowth of plant life and alters the habitat that Florida's native plants and animals need to thrive.

Stormwater treatment areas remove phosphorus from runoff water by channeling it through shallow marshes filled with aquatic plants like hyacinth, southern naiad and algae. These plants take up or absorb phosphorus from water traveling through, reducing to very low levels the amount of the nutrients reaching the Everglades.

Plants in the stormwater treatment area keep working even after they die. Cattail plants remove phosphorus from decomposing leaves that become wetland sediments. Finally, the limestone layer beneath the sediment absorbs and holds phosphorus, providing decades of phosphorus storage.

### Recreation at Stormwater Treatment Areas

Stormwater treatment areas provide another bonus – prime home and visiting territory to wildlife including wading birds, ducks and American alligators.

The South Florida Water Management District welcomes guided visitors to two stormwater treatment areas for bird watching. It isn't unusual to spot roseate spoonbills, fulvous and black bellied whistling ducks, white storks, little blue herons, great blue herons, eagles, hawks, plovers and dowitchers in these constructed wetlands. Local enthusiasts offer seasonal bird watching tours.

Hunting is also permitted in three stormwater treatment areas during seasons established and managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



*The loggerhead shrike, or *Lanius ludovicianus*, is one of dozens of native birds, ducks and coots that can be spotted in stormwater treatment areas. Also known as the "butcher bird," shrikes don't have talons so they often impale their prey on thorns or barbed wire fencing to make it easier to feed.*

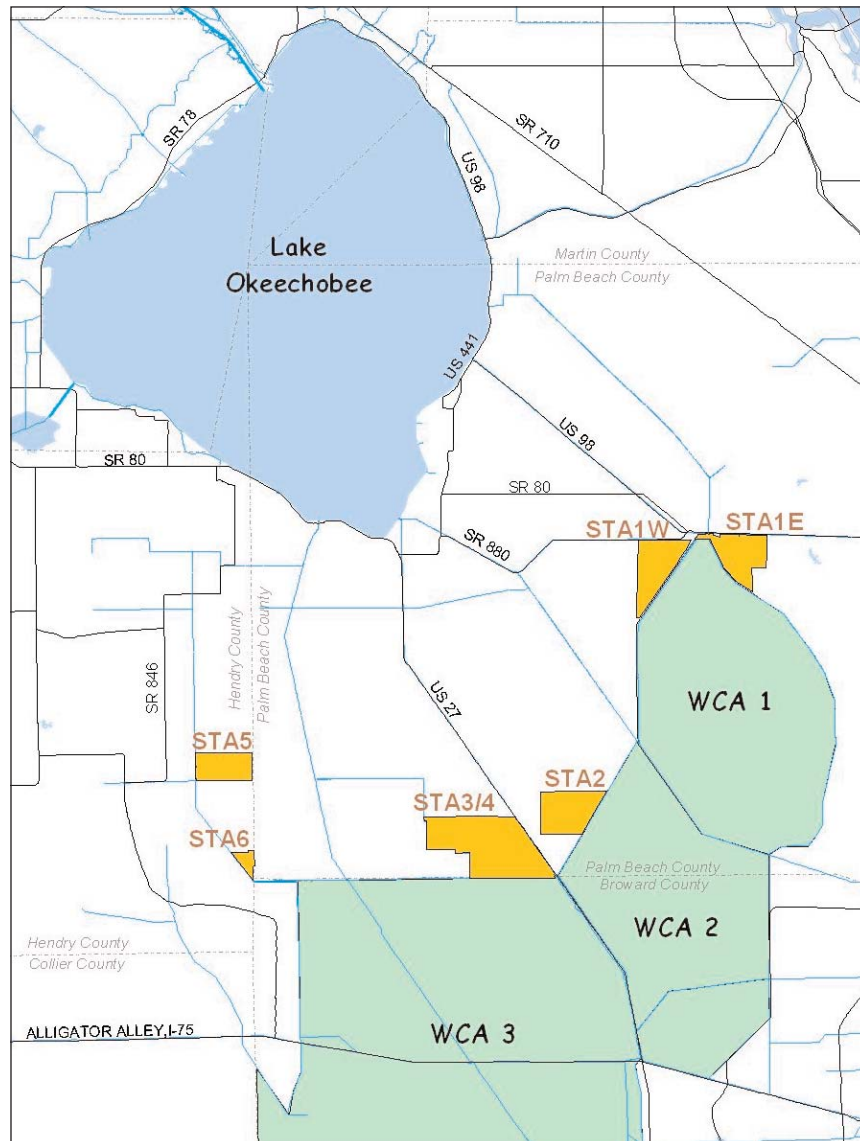
## Where to Go and What to Do

At Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East (STA 1E) in Palm Beach County, visitors can bird watch and sightsee with guides offered through Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, <http://www.pinejog.org/WebPages/PublicPrograms.htm>. For reservations, call (561) 686-6600. A public access facility is planned for the site in 2008.

At Stormwater Treatment Area 5 in Hendry County, visitors can participate in guided bird watching tours offered through the Hendry Glades Audubon Society, <http://www.orgsites.com/fl/hgaudubon/>. For reservations, call (863) 902-0856 or (863) 674-0695, or e-mail at [sta5birding@earthlink.net](mailto:sta5birding@earthlink.net)

At Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West (STA 1W) in Palm Beach County, Stormwater Treatment Area 5 (STA 5) in Hendry County and Stormwater Treatment Area 3/4 (STA 3/4) along the Palm Beach and Broward county lines, hunting is allowed during managed waterfowl seasons. For information, visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website at <http://myfwc.com/hunting/>. Public access facilities are planned for STA 3/4 in 2007, and at STA 1W in 2008.

At Stormwater Treatment Area 6 in Hendry County, visitors can sightsee, walk or bike.



JR11/07/06

**[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)**

**South Florida Water Management District**  
**3301 Gun Club Road**  
**West Palm Beach, Florida 33406**  
**561-686-8800 • FL WATS 800-432-2045**  
**[www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)**

**MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 24680**  
**West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680**

### SERVICE CENTERS

Big Cypress Basin/Naples  
 239-597-1505  
 Broward  
 954-713-3200  
 Florida Keys (Plantation Key)  
 305-853-3219 or 800-464-5067  
 Lower West Coast  
 239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie  
 772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100  
 Miami-Dade  
 305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300  
 Okeechobee  
 863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200  
 Orlando  
 407-858-6100 or 800-250-4250  
 Palm Beach County  
 561-682-2283 or 800-432-2045